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Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal

Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

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Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Twelfth meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Programme of work and budget

Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
Seventh meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
Item 6 of the provisional agenda**
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Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
Seventh meeting
Geneva, 4–15 May 2015
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Clearing-house mechanism for information exchange

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In section III.B of the decisions on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions,[1] the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants invited parties to consider establishing common websites and documentation centres at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels, containing available information on human health and environmental impacts relevant to the three conventions. The conferences of the parties also requested the secretariats of the three conventions to develop systems of information exchange on health and environmental impacts, including a clearing-house mechanism, with the aim of these systems serving all three conventions.

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* UNEP/CHW.12/1.

** UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/1.

*** UNEP/POPS/COP.7/1.

[1] Decisions IX/10, RC-4/11 and SC-4/34, adopted by the conferences of the parties at their meetings held in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

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2. At their ordinary meetings in 2011 and 2013, the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions decided[2] to include cross-cutting and joint activities in the programmes of work of the three conventions, including activity S10 on a clearing-house mechanism for information exchange.

3. In paragraph 17 of the 2013 omnibus decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions,[3] the conferences of the parties requested the secretariats, among other things, to recommend areas for further development or adjustment of joint activities, which included the joint clearing-house mechanism, for consideration by the conferences of the parties at their meetings in 2015.

II. Implementation

4. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the joint clearing-house mechanism during the biennium 2014–2015, focusing mainly on the integration of different systems that had been developed separately by the secretariats before the start of the synergies process. More specifically, the Secretariat has developed the following new information systems: joint calendar, joint contact and expert database, joint scientific and technical publications, webinar library and online reporting. These have resulted in significant enhancements to the conventions' websites[4] and internal knowledge management capacity. Furthermore, the content and navigation of the conventions' websites were harmonized to improve access to the status of ratification, scientific, legal and technical information as well as information on meetings and conferences.

5. The Secretariat is working towards the implementation of all 2014–2015 activities pertaining to the joint clearing-house mechanism by the end of 2015. These include, among others, the delivery of a prototype country profile and a pilot project on sharing information with a regional centre or national Government institution, using the technical specifications outlined in the guidance document to facilitate the implementation of the joint clearing-house mechanism at the national and regional levels (UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/INF/19).

6. Pursuant to paragraph 17 of the 2013 omnibus decision, a proposed joint clearing-house mechanism strategy for 2016–2019 has been prepared by the Secretariat (see UNEP/CHW.12/INF/50-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/36-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/56) that focuses on working with regional centres and other stakeholders to enhance information exchange by introducing standard data classification systems (taxonomy) and on the development of a multi-node system that facilitates the exchange of information between nodes using standard protocols and services. The strategy is aimed at strengthening regional delivery mechanisms by improving information- and expertise-sharing relevant to the implementation of the three conventions.

III. Proposed action

7. Each Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Notes* the progress made in the implementation of the joint clearing-house mechanism;

2. *Takes note* of the proposed joint clearing-house mechanism strategy,[5] and invites parties and others to provide comments thereon to the Secretariat by 31 March 2016;

3. *Requests* the Secretariat:

(a) To begin implementing, on an interim basis, the proposed joint clearing-house mechanism strategy;

(b) To prepare a revised joint clearing-house mechanism strategy for consideration by the conferences of the parties at their meetings in 2017, taking into account the comments received from parties and others in furtherance to paragraph 2 above.

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[2] BC-10/29, RC-5/12 and SC-5/27 in 2011, and BC-11/26, RC-6/16 and SC-6/30 in 2013.

[3] BC.Ex-2/1, RC.Ex-2/1, SC.Ex-2/1 adopted by the conferences of the parties to the three conventions at their simultaneous extraordinary meetings held in 2013.

[4] www.basel.int, www.pic.int, chm.pops.int and synergies.pops.int.

[5] See UNEP/CHW.12/INF/50-UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.7/INF/36-UNEP/POPS/COP.7/INF/56.